

Fen Line Users Association

Thameslink 2013 Franchise 'Clarifications,' published 5 January 2012.

The Department of Transport [DfT] has published Bulletin 1 in response to questions raised by potential applicants for the Thameslink Franchise 2013 (and other franchises).

The DfT Bulletin is at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-essex-thameside/franchises-bulletin-1.pdf>

The following questions (and DfT responses to them) are included:

Clarification Question

Can you confirm current plans for IEP [Intercity Express Programme] ? In particular, is it envisaged that a fleet of dedicated 5-car IEP sets will be introduced on the fast Kings Cross - Cambridge/Kings Lynn services from December 2018?

Clarification Question Response (DfT reference PQ2012-008)

These plans cannot yet be confirmed. However, for the purposes of this PQQ [Pre-Qualification Questionnaire], potential providers can assume that such a fleet will be available for these routes and/or propose their own preferred rolling stock solutions.

Clarification Question

Can you confirm that the Thameslink franchise will retain all current Great Northern services operated by First Capital Connect, including those that 'remain domestic to the East Coast Main Line' (i.e. those that originate/terminate at Kings Cross and Moorgate) [these include King's Lynn-King's Cross]?

Clarification Question Response (DfT reference PQ2012-005)

This has not been finally decided. However, for the purposes of this PQQ, you can assume that the future franchise will retain all current GN [Great Northern] services.

See next page for FLUA commentary.

FLUA Commentary

Our comments are as under:

(a) To meet the government's previously published additional capacity requirements on the southern part of the East Coast Main Line (ECML), the following are expected to be operationally integrated at a common date (currently planned as December 2018) -

- (i) Mostly *existing* (but some additional) long-distance ECML **125 mph** services;
- (ii) *New* cross-London Thameslink 100 mph services (such as Cambridge-Horsham);
- (ii) *Existing* Great Northern 100 mph services (excluding King's Cross-King's Lynn);
- (iv) *Existing* King's Lynn-King's Cross services (the "Cambridge/King's Lynn fasts") but utilising **new 125 mph** trains (replacing the current 100 mph stock).

(b) If all these elements are not delivered by the common date then the government's previously published ECML capacity requirements will not be capable of being met at that time.

(c) To keep existing services running at all times, contingency measures must plan for other eventualities.

(d) The DfT clarifications show a pre-disposition to utilise 125 mph trains to be built under the Intercity Express Programme (IEP) for King's Lynn-King's Cross services - **but demonstrate that the government is open to potential 'better' suggestions from franchise applicants.**

(e) The DfT clarifications show a pre-disposition to include King's Lynn-King's Cross services in the Thameslink Franchise 2013 (London commuter-based) rather than, say, in an East Coast/ECML (long-distance based) franchise - **but demonstrate that the government is open to potential 'better' suggestions from franchise applicants.**

(f) There may be a kind of consultation in play, perhaps in response to the extensive and ongoing criticism from some quarters about the government's Intercity Express Programme and its Thameslink Rolling Stock Programme. The unarticulated question seems to be "*can you do it better [in value-for-money terms]?"*

(g) Current King's Lynn-King's Cross services link Fen Line stations directly with two major national "engines of growth" - Cambridge and London.

(h) In seeking the best for Fen Line users, we support new 125 mph trains, running fast between Cambridge and King's Cross, every half-hour, within a London-based commuter franchise (such as the Thameslink Franchise 2013).

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